

ASHBURTON
Urban District Council.

ANNUAL
MEDICAL REPORT
FOR 1905.

Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure of laying my Seventh Annual Report before you, and in it you will find, as usual, a resume of the general health of the District, the number of births and deaths, the number of zymotic diseases and other matters of interest connected with the district.

As you are aware the district is somewhat of a triangle in shape, having the town of Ashburton as its base, and extending in an east, west, and northerly direction for some miles, so that it might be described as part urban and part rural, the acreage being 6,925 acres and the population, according to the census of 1901, 2 660.

BIRTHS.—During the year 1905 there were registered 49 births, 25 boys, and 24 girls, which is less than previous years, the numbers being: 1904 55; 1903, 72; 1902, 64; 1901, 64; and 1900, 68.

DEATHS.—During the year 1905, 35 deaths were registered—16 males and 19 females—which is 11 lower than in 1904, when 46 were registered; in fact, very much lower than any previous year since the formation of the Urban District, when the figures were 1903, 65; 1902, 53; 1901, 53; and 1900, 60. Comparing the births with the deaths there is a natural increase of 14. These figures, according to the census of 1901, give a death rate of 13.1 per 1,000 of the population, which is a very marked improvement on previous years, when the rate was 1904, 17.2; 1903, 24.4; 1902, 19.9; 1901, 20; and 1900, 21.7. The greatest number of deaths took place in the months of February and June, when seven and five were respectively registered, and the smallest in August, when only one was registered. Under the 1st year 4 deaths were registered; from the 1st to the 5th year, 1; from the 5th to the 15th, 0; from the 15th to the 25th, 2; from the 25th to the 65th year, 9; whilst above the latter age 19 took place, five of whom exceeded 80 years. The deaths were classified as follows:—Epidemic influenza, 1; enteritis, 1; phthisis, pulmonalis, 2; other tubercular diseases, 2; cancer, 3; bronchitis, 2; pneumonia, 3; premature birth, 1; heart disease, 6; accidents, 2; all other diseases 9. I would call attention to the small number of deaths under one year.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES.—Under this heading I have again the pleasure of making a very favourable report, as during the year 1905 only four very mild cases of erysipelas were reported, no case of any other notifiable diseases having occurred. In fact, I am pleased to be able to state that no such case has been notified since November, 1903, a fact which, I consider, the Council may be congratulated on. During the previous years the number of cases reported under the Notification Act were: 1904, 2; 1903, 41; 1902, 141; 1901, 51; and 1900, 20.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.—These have been regularly inspected, and have always been found in a clean and sanitary condition.

DAIRIES.—These have also been regularly visited, and it was not found necessary to find fault with their sanitary condition.

COW HOUSES were also regularly visited. In some few cases it was necessary to insist on some sanitary work being carried out, but as a rule they were clean and well ventilated.

COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.—Particular attention has been paid in this direction, and there is no doubt a steady improvement in their sanitary condition, but still much requires to be done. There condition, but still much requires to be done. There 569 inhabited houses in the District, with an average of 4.7 occupants to each house. Certificates for the occupation of several new houses have been received and granted where the bye-laws were conformed to. One was withheld until it was done.

WATER SUPPLY.—There has been no deficiency during the year, notwithstanding such an exceedingly dry summer.

PROSECUTION.—There was one prosecution during the year—for occupying a house which was not in conformity with the bye-laws; a conviction was obtained.

HOUSE REFUSE is collected on alternate days, but a properly constructed cart for the purpose is sadly needed.

DISINFECTANTS were freely distributed and were freely used in the drains and sewers during the summer.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—These were also kept under observation, and it was found necessary to find fault in two cases, one of insufficient ventilation, and the other insanitary condition of yard and adjacent premises.

SCHOOLS.—It was not found necessary to close the Schools during the year.

As I have stated in my previous reports, there is a decided improvement in the sanitary condition of the district. Many ill-paved courts have been properly paved and insanitary closets have either been put in good condition or new ones built. The proposed low-level sewer at the back of East Street is still engaging the attention of the Council, and has proceeded so far that a Local Government Board inquiry is shortly to be held with the view of obtaining permission to borrow money for carrying out the necessary work. I am pleased to state that the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Wilson, carries out his duties in a satisfactory manner.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

Henry S. Johnson

Medical Officer of Health.

Totnes, February 16th, 1906.

